

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Continued Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE QUARREL IN THE NAVY.

From the N. Y. Tribune. If the dispute between the line and staff of the navy concerned only the few hundred gentlemen who differ over ships and naval tactics, we should feel little disposition to take part in it. We believe, however, that it has now reached a point which touches the efficiency of the service and intimately affects the whole country. An American vessel of war, in the present state of things, must be little better than a hell agent, unless by good fortune the line and staff officers on board happen to be men of such just temper, common sense, and mutual adaptability that by their personal qualities they can neutralize the misfortunes entailed by their false relations towards each other. How often it chances that all the officers of a ship are such paragons, our readers may guess for themselves. The complaint of the staff officers is not a mere sentimental grievance, or a question of a gold stripe which can be settled by coaxing them to go home and be quiet. Rank, with its accompanying pay, privileges, and honors, is a serious matter to a naval or military man, the only material reward he can ever look to after a long life of toil. When the war broke out, and new grades were created in consequence of the enlarged size and expanded duties of the navy, all the line officers were promoted one or two degrees. The act of Congress made no special mention of the staff, but it was taken for granted that the purpose was to advance them in proportion. So when the captains were promoted to be commanders, the surgeons, engineers, and paymasters, ranking with captains, were assigned relative rank with commanders, and so on through the list. That Congress approved this interpretation of the law is evident from the fact that during eight years the Senate unhesitatingly confirmed nominations made in accordance with it, and not a whisper of illegality was heard. But as soon as Vice-Admiral Porter, who is generally regarded as the leader of the line in the present quarrel, was placed in virtual charge of the navy, it was discovered that all these promotions were illegal. All the surgeons, engineers, paymasters, and constructors were consequently degraded, their pay being at the same time of course reduced, so that now the highest grade a staff officer can obtain is the assimilated rank of captain. The senior staff officer on the active list has held his present rank nearly thirty-eight years. No captain in the line and only eight of the twenty-five commodores have been so long in the service. But the question is not only whether the staff shall have rank in proportion to the line, but whether they shall virtually have any rank at all. The line officers will declare that they ought to take precedence of the staff on all occasions, afloat and ashore. The spruce little midshipman just out of school must outrank the surgeon who may have assisted in bringing him into the world. Of course the executive officers in charge of a ship must have authority over all on board; nobody disputes that; but relative rank does not imply a divided command, and the staff do not ask that under any circumstances they shall exercise the powers which properly belong to the line. There are certain mysterious privileges of the cabin and the mess table involved in this controversy which we do not profess to understand and do not much care for. But it seems to us that a class of officers whose services are highly important to the country are now subjected to a contemptuous treatment which would probably drive most of them out of the service if they were not wedded to it by long custom, or were sure of immediate employment in civil life. As a rule we don't believe that mutiny and general disorganization will be the inevitable result of treating them civilly. We believe that their manners and morals will not corrupt the fighting officers who seem so loth to associate with them, and their dues do not entitle them for the contempt of gentlemen. A line officer, educated from boyhood for his special duties at the expense of the country. But our surgeons, our engineers, our paymasters, and our naval constructors we must get ready-made. We certainly shall not get good ones unless we offer them some inducement to serve us.

MR. SUMNER'S FINANCIAL SCHEME.

From the N. Y. World. Mr. Sumner's plan for refunding the national debt is not worth much discussion at present; because, whatever its merits, it is not immediately practicable. Even if we shared his sanguine estimate, and believed that the Five-twenties of 1862 could be refunded this year in five per cent. Ten-forties, we should nevertheless think that part of the project premature and ill-judged. For if the Government can borrow at five per cent. before the resumption of specie payments, it could borrow at a much less rate after resumption; and there would be no economy in binding the nation to pay a disadvantageous rate for so long a period as ten years. Mr. Sumner proposes to substitute five hundred millions of Ten-forties for the same amount of Five-twenties. The saving of interest would be one per cent., amounting to fifty millions a year; a trivial gain even if the substitution could be accomplished, and a damage to the public credit if it should be vainly attempted. The country needs immediate relief, not from five millions of annual taxes, but from a hundred millions; and this relief could be had at once by reducing the revenue to the actual necessities of expenditure, and postponing, for the present, the policy of diminishing the principal of the debt.

Mr. Sumner, to do him justice, has a clear perception of the absurdity of the spasmodic strain upon the national resources over which Mr. Boutwell and his blind eulogists are so fond of bragging. With his fondness for far-fetched illustrations, he likens Boutwell's policy to the famous charge at Balaklava, when the six hundred rode "into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell," as Tennyson sung it. "This is fine," said a cool military spectator of the charge, "but it is not war." And in our financial policy, Mr. Sumner, although he does not quote this line of the poem, thinks that "somebody has blundered." He says of Boutwell's tremendous financial ride into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell, "this may be very fine, but it is not business." The credit of the Government is not promoted by taxing the country into poverty to pay debts before they are due. It is as if a farmer should sell his lungs and his seed-wheat and keep his fields barren to prepay the next year's interest on a mortgage.

The proper order of financial proceedings is, first, to reduce the taxes; then, to resume specie payments; and, lastly, to refund the debt at a lower rate of interest. First of all, the urgent thing to be done is to relieve the industry of the country from the crushing burden of needless taxes. Mr. Boutwell boasts that he is prepaying the public debt, in advance of its maturity, at the rate of a hundred millions a year. The taxes may be safely reduced to the full amount of these uncollected advances. Who would have a right to complain? Not the public creditors; for their principal is not due in fifteen years, and meanwhile the Government discharges every obligation to them if it raises money enough to pay the interest. The suffering people will not complain; for relief from taxes is the very thing they are seeking. If anybody complains, it will be a set of shallow, gasconading demagogues, who fancy that it is their duty for the country to be getting out of debt than to be getting rich. Pray, what is the object, wherein lies the advantage of refunding the national debt, which Boutwell, Sumner, and everybody, unite in regarding as desirable? They tell us that it will lighten the taxes. But if it were possible to refund the whole debt to-morrow at four per cent., the relief would be only half as great as would result from bringing the present revenue of the Government down to its present wants. The greater relief is practical, the lesser relief is, for the present, impossible. Why, then, do at once what can easily be done at once, and proceed to cope with the difficult problems after the simple one is solved? Let the burden be first reduced by simply talking off taxes which are not needed, and then let us do our best to reduce them still further by exchanging the six per cent. bonds for others at a lower rate.

Mr. Sumner's views respecting the justice of spreading a large portion of the debt over future generations, are sound and aptly illustrated. The war, he says (following Mr. Wells), has cost the North upwards of six thousand millions, and only about twenty-four hundred millions remain as debt. The results of the war will benefit all future generations, and every generation more than this, which has borne so great a proportion of the burden. Has not this generation already done its share, and far more than its share, in defraying the cost of the war? Of its actual money cost we have paid more than three-fifths; we have borne all the anguish, all the mourning, all the sundering of dear domestic ties; and on this generation falls the whole burden of deranged industry, disordered currency, and financial peril, which are the evil legacy of a great war. This generation has done its part; and posterity will have no reason to impugn its equity, if, with the greater portion of the benefit, it transmits also some share of the burden. This reasoning would hold, even if the population and resources of the country were to remain stationary; but as these will be tenfold their present amount within the next century, the burden will be spread out so thin by diffusion as to be scarcely felt. At any rate, we have done our part towards the extinction of the principal. If we faithfully pay the interest, and refund the debt on terms favorable to those who are to come after us, they will owe us, not complaints, but gratitude.

FREE LOVE, FREE DIVORCES, CONFLICTING STATE LAWS, AND GENERAL DEMORALIZATION.

From the N. Y. Herald. The Rev. Horace Cooke is the latest free-love sensation. A fine looking, dashing fellow, it appears that he has been a gay divine, a man of fashion, a ladies' man, given to flirtations and addicted to opium. His incoherent letter on his late escapade betrays a mind unbinged, a brain disordered, a man driven to remorse and desperation by the crime which he meditated, the folly of undertaking it and by the hie and cry which has hunted him down. He was not so far depraved as to carry out his base design, and in resisting the temptation at the point when he had ruined himself, in order to rescue his deluded companion, he challenges something of respect for his apparent repentance, though passed beyond the pale of restoration to confidence, except through a long probation.

able tormenter, had learned that there was a divorce in the case—an Indiana divorce—but it only exasperated him because of the secrecy through which it had been procured. From all these instrumentalities of social disorganization, free-love eloquence, free-love partnerships, and free and easy divorces have become so common that the crimes involved have almost ceased to be regarded as crimes, or only criminal when so bunglingly managed as to be found out too soon. At the same time our sensational papers, in order to supply what they suppose to be a morbid public appetite for soap, soap, in order to give pungency to an eloquent or a divorce, resort to invention where the facts are deficient, as we have seen in this case of the Rev. Mr. Cooke. What is to be the end of all these causes and active agents of social disorder and destruction? They are leading the country rapidly to the old free-love system of the Australian savages, where the wife was secured by capture and dismissed at pleasure. As we are, does the one-wife law of Chicago or New York exhibit to-day a higher standard of practical morality than the polygamy of Great Salt Lake City? And what is the remedy for all this chain of evils, so destructive of peace of the family and so perilous to the very existence of society? A whole chain of reforms is needed in our laws relating to marriage and divorce, and first of all, we think, we want a new amendment to the Constitution of the United States whereby from Congress we may have a uniform and general law of marriage and divorce operating over all the length and breadth of the land alike. It has come to this necessity of a general law of Congress for the regulation of railroads and telegraphs, for which Congress has the power, and it has come to this necessity of a general law touching marriage and divorce, for which Congress ought to have the power; for the day when conflicting State laws affecting the order of society might be tolerated has, with the introduction of railroads and telegraphs, passed away. Therefore we want an amendment to the national Constitution giving power to Congress to make uniform laws regulating the institution of marriage and the last resort of divorce.

MORE OF ADMIRAL PORTER'S ECO-NOMIES.

From the N. Y. Sun. Among Admiral Porter's so-called reforms of the Navy Department is the establishment of a torpedo corps, composed of a superintendent and about twenty assistants. The navy report fails to explain exactly why the country needs such a corps in time of peace. Then, too, we have a signal corps organized upon the army principle, with its superintendent, numerous assistants, and hundreds of men now being instructed in the mysterious signs which go to make up the code. We also have the new grades of seamen—gunners, machinists, coppersmiths—all at higher rates of pay than were formerly given to others performing these duties, but without all decreasing the number employed in other grades.

But a leak of far more importance—one not originally created, but permitted to continue by the present administration—is the order giving an increase of 33 1/3 per cent. upon the salary of every officer. In 1866 Congress tacked to the Naval Appropriation bill a clause repealing an act which repealed another act passed in 1812, making certain small allowances to officers for quarters and fuel. Secretary Welles thereupon issued a general order stating that, as the apportionment of the allowances under this revised law would be attended with much difficulty, every officer would be allowed in lieu thereof an addition to his salary of 33 1/3 per cent. The order at the time it was issued created much excitement, and the present danger is the measure upon the ground that by a single stroke of Mr. Welles' pen more than \$2,000,000 were added to the expenses of the Government. The attention of Congress was finally directed to the subject, and a resolution was introduced calling upon the Secretary to explain his authority to issue such an order, and what amount was necessary to carry out its provisions. There the matter dropped, the resolution being tabled, and finally the order was forgotten.

Upon the accession of Secretary Borie great anxiety was felt throughout the service lest the famous order should share the fate of others issued by Mr. Welles. Had Admiral Porter not been on hand to prevent it, this might have been the case; but his \$7,000 per year was increased under this order to \$9,333, and receding it was therefore out of the question; and to this day more than \$2,000,000 per year are expended in paying these one-third additional salaries.

Let us see if the majority of officers need it. There are over fifty young Lieutenant-Commanders from 20 to 25 years of age, who receive the following salary for their distinguished services:—

Table with 2 columns: Service description and Salary. Total: \$2,250. On foreign service this salary is paid in gold. A lieutenant, not more than a year or so out of the Academy, where, at a cost of \$25,000, he has had drilled into his cranium just sufficient learning to make him dangerous, receives for the honor he confers upon the United States by holding his commission the following:—

Table with 2 columns: Service description and Salary. Total: \$2,609. And so on throughout the service. In the case of older officers, who are few in number, no doubt the salary allowed by law is quite small enough, in fact it should be increased; but our one hundred and eighty Lieutenant-Commanders and all below that grade, both in the line and staff, are paid far more than their services are worth, and more than the country can afford to pay. Before the war Lieutenants were paid \$1,500 per year, and did not attain that rank till years after graduating. It is to be hoped that Congress will give this matter the attention it deserves, and at once abolish the old law under which this allowance is made. Nothing can be plainer than the fact that the navy needs a thorough reconstruction. The many abuses which have crept into it, the jealousies and bickerings between different classes of its officers, and the frightful extravagance shown in the administration of its affairs, have driven it into its present lamentable state of inefficiency.

"DOWN WITH THE TAXES"

From the N. Y. Times. This is the cry which Senator Sumner now echoes, undeterred by the fact that he will be proclaimed a "traitor" because he dares to diverge from the policy which is laid down by the Secretary of the Treasury. The truth is that the demand for a reduction of the taxes has now reached a point at which no Government could afford to disregard it. The contradictory vagaries of one or two journals only serve to bring out into greater prominence the unanimity with which the large

proportion of the press, and the bulk of the people, ask for the immediate reinstitution of the burdens which are paralyzing trade, restricting enterprise, and rendering everybody poorer. The taxes are kept up at a war rate merely to induce a delusion. It is argued that if we do not pay off the whole of our debt now, we shall never do it. The supposition has no more value than can be attached to any other hallucination. Surely we have already paid a very fair proportion towards the expenses of a war the advantages of which will extend to all time. Merciless Sumner boldly tells those who are for merciful taxation, that the national debt was incurred for succeeding generations no less than for ourselves, and that posterity ought to take its part in paying it off. The resources of the people are being strained now to the last point. Suppose we had an other war upon our hands, where should we find the money with which to carry it on? We should be obliged to stop paying off the debt in any case. But could a people long suffering from pitiless depletion at the hands of tax-gatherers be expected to pay enormously increased taxes for the purposes of the hour? It is not only shortsighted to keep up the present rate of taxation in time of peace; it is absolutely dangerous.

It is said that we are bound to prove to the world that we can and will pay our debt. Who on earth doubts it now? Who that we should care to convince supposes that we have not the power to pay our debt in a reasonable time? We are now absolutely wasting our energies in the attempt to comply with a croquet of a few doctrinaires, all of whom are unfamiliar with economic science, and have been carried away by a figment of their own brains. Who does not smart every day from excessive taxation in one form or other? We were bound to bear it once. There was no help for it. But we ought to be relieved now, and all the more cheerfully because it would make many a heavy sacrifice without a murmur, all through the time of peril. The Government ought not now to say, "While you are willing to pay, we will take care to squeeze as much as possible out of you," but rather take up a liberal position towards a people who have been so generous to it.

We shall not discuss the bill introduced by Senator Sumner until other plans already promised are before us. But we are glad to find that he is prepared to raise his voice in Congress in favor of a policy which has reason, justice, and safety to recommend it. "The country," he says, "is uneasy under its heavy burdens. War taxes should not be peace taxes; and so long as the present system continues there is a constant and painful memento of war, while business halts in chains and life hangs under the load." He proceeds to show that we are impoverishing ourselves now in order to pay our obligations long before they become due, but that, on the other hand, if we reduce the taxes, our resources will be immeasurably increased, "the country will breathe freer, business will be more elastic, life will be easier, and the national debt will cease to be a burden, becoming fine by degrees, and beautifully less, until it gradually ceases to exist." We commend every word of this statement to the earnest attention of the Administration. It is childish to meet this most reasonable appeal to the Government for relief with the cry, "You are running away from your party." It is in the true interests of the Government that we should try to open its eyes to the vast importance of taking off some of the load under which the people of this country are now languishing, and from which they are crying with one voice to be relieved.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

OFFICE OF WELLS, FARGO & COMPANY, No. 84 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, December 25, 1869.—Notice is hereby given, that the Transfer Books of Wells, Fargo & Company will be CLOSED on the 31st day of JANUARY, 1870, at 10 o'clock P. M., to enable the Company to ascertain who are owners of the stock of the old Ten Million Capital. The owners of that stock will be entitled to participate in the distribution of assets provided for by the agreement with the Pacific Express Company.

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN MERCHANTS' UNION EXPRESS COMPANY, No. 113 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, November 25, 1869.—The Board of Directors of the American Merchants' Union Express Company have this day declared a dividend of THREE PER CENT. (\$3) per share on the outstanding capital stock of the Company, payable on the 15th day of JANUARY next.

OFFICE OF THE BELVIDERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY, BELVIDERE, N. J., Dec. 8, 1869.—Notice is hereby given to the stockholders of the BELVIDERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY respectively, that assessments amounting to SIXTY PER CENT. of the unpaid stock of the Company have been made and payment of the same called for on or before the eighth day of JANUARY, 1870, at 10 o'clock P. M.

OFFICE OF CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD OF CALIFORNIA, No. 54 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK, December 15, 1869.—THE SIX PER CENT. interest coupons of first mortgage bonds of the Central Pacific Railroad of California, due January 1, 1870, will be paid at the banking house of Fish & Hatch, No. 5 NASSAU STREET, New York.

OFFICE OF THE HOUSTON AND TEXAS CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY, No. 23 WALL STREET, NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 1869.—Coupons of the Mortgage Bonds of this Company, due Jan. 1, 1870, will be paid in gold coin on and after that date, at the National City Bank, New York.

OFFICE OF CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD OF CALIFORNIA, No. 54 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK, Dec. 17, 1869.—The Seven Per Cent. Interest Coupons of this Company, due Jan. 1, 1870, will be paid at the banking house of Eugene Kelly & Co., No. 21 Nassau street, New York.

OFFICE OF CALIFORNIA AND OREGON RAILROAD, No. 64 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK, Dec. 17.—The Six Per Cent. Interest Coupons of First Mortgage Bonds of the California and Oregon Railroad, due Jan. 1, 1870, will be paid at the Banking House of Fish & Hatch, No. 5 Nassau street, New York.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLDERS OF THE SUMMIT BRANCH RAILROAD COMPANY, No. 113 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, Dec. 15, 1869.—The following gentlemen were unanimously elected officers for 1870:—

OFFICE OF THE CAMBRIA IRON COMPANY.—THE Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the CAMBRIA IRON COMPANY will be held at their Office, No. 10 CHESTNUT STREET, Philadelphia, on TUESDAY, the 15th day of January next, at 4 o'clock P. M., when an election will be held for seven Directors, to serve for the ensuing year.

OFFICE OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY, Office No. 224 South DELAWARE AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15, 1870.—The Transfer Books of this Company will be closed on the 15th day of JANUARY, and reopened after FORTY-ONE PER CENT. on the 15th day of FEBRUARY, 1870.

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PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD CO., Office, No. 227 N. FOURTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 25, 1869. DIVIDEND NOTICE. The Transfer Books of the Company will be closed on FRIDAY, the 15th instant, and reopened on TUESDAY, January 14, 1870.

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLDERS OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD COMPANY, held January 10, 1870, the following gentlemen were unanimously elected officers for 1870:—

PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY, Office No. 224 South DELAWARE AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15, 1870.—The Transfer Books of this Company will be closed on the 15th day of JANUARY, and reopened after FORTY-ONE PER CENT. on the 15th day of FEBRUARY, 1870.

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SPECIAL NOTICES.

PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD CO., Office, No. 227 N. FOURTH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 25, 1869. DIVIDEND NOTICE. The Transfer Books of the Company will be closed on FRIDAY, the 15th instant, and reopened on TUESDAY, January 14, 1870.

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLDERS OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD COMPANY, held January 10, 1870, the following gentlemen were unanimously elected officers for 1870:—

PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANY, Office No. 224 South DELAWARE AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15, 1870.—The Transfer Books of this Company will be closed on the 15th day of JANUARY, and reopened after FORTY-ONE PER CENT. on the 15th day of FEBRUARY, 1870.

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